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11 Steps to the Job of Your Dreams

I was reading a [post by Ramit @ I Will Teach You to Be Rich](#) yesterday and the question came up

" I am in college, but have lots of free time, so I can work full time at a startup plus add in a lot of extra hours (I know how startups are) on site or by telecommuting.

I applied to a few, sent my resume, etc.. but the same thing always happens. They want a portfolio.. links to things I've worked on. I am a programmer, PHP/Rails/C/Ruby/etc.. but I don't have a degree in anything related to CS, and no professional portfolio.

I'm thinking the only option I have is to get a regular \$8/hr job, while working on more and more projects in my free time. Enough projects to get a startup interested in me."

A similar post also came up on [JD's blog Get Rich Slowly](#) as JD had a chance to speak to 70 graduating seniors.

How to *Not* get the Job

If you like wasting time sending out endless resumes, be like everyone else. Go to Monster.com and apply to everything you see. Don't take the time to research the company. Don't modify your resume to fit the position. Sit back and wonder why your phone doesn't ring...I call it the shotgun approach to job hunting.

Or you can do something even worse. Use a resume blaster. If Monster.com is a shotgun, this is a nuclear device!

If you want a job, don't apply to job postings

It only gets you thrown into the black hole known as Human Resources. Their job is to screen out applicants to a reasonable level. This is a case where you want a sniper rifle, not a shotgun. It may seem counterintuitive, but the fewer jobs you pursue the more successful you will be.

11 Step Strategy to Land your Dream Job

Here is my 11 step strategy. It has almost always gotten me the job. Everyone I know that has used it found it to be the easiest job search of their careers.

It may seem like more work, but it isn't. You put in 10 hours up front and blow away your competition. You impress your future boss. You go in offering a solution to their problems, not asking them to help you with a job.

You also find the "hidden" jobs. The best jobs are filled internally. If they go out to the general public it is because they are required to do so by HR. They already know who they want to hire.

1. Identify 10 companies you want to work for.
2. Do basic research on these companies and the industry. Talk to friends. Ask family what they know. Google them. Your goal is to weed it down to 3-5 that are strong candidates.
3. Now you start the real work. Dig deep into each company. Go to the library and research them. Look up news articles and press releases. Get their annual reports.
4. Do the same for the industry. You want to be an industry expert.
5. Research their competition. Know thy enemy...
6. Get an informational interview with several people in the company. You need to know more about the company and your future boss. You may find you don't like what you see, and now is the best time to change your mind. Do not try and turn this into a job interview. You need to be honest and be doing research. Often this will lead to an interview. They may ask you back for an official interview, but you are not ready yet. Push it out a few days out so you can get ready. Not only are you gathering info, you are getting to know the management team. You want to go in as a known candidate, not as one of the masses sent by HR. Also, if you meet several people and come across informed and capable, multiple jobs will appear.
7. Put together your portfolio focusing on how you and your skills will help the company succeed and grow.
Things to include:
 - Resume/CV
 - Letters of recommendation: go to family friends, coaches, professors, ministers, etc...
 - certificates of accomplishment
 - diplomas you have earned

- a copy of your transcript
 - executive summary of the company
 - executive summary of the industry
 - executive summary of the competition
 - summary of the projects you have worked on (listed last because it is the least important thing).
8. Think of ways you can help the company. Come up with several thoughtful questions about the company and the interviewer. Go through common interview questions and come up with good answers. Practice with friends.
 9. Call your future boss and tell him you love the company. Let him know you have been researching the industry and think you have some ideas to help them _____(fill in the blank with your newfound industry knowledge and info from the informational interviews). Be polite and professional.
 10. Go dressed in a suit. Shine your shoes. Get a hair cut. Look your best.
 11. Send everyone you meet at the company a thank you card. Don't email, write it out by hand.

You can also find this article published on [11 Steps to the Job of Your Dreams](#), and on the tag pages [Wealth](#).